

(<https://www.actforchildren.org/champion/join-movement/e-advocate>)

This Issue: 2020 Election Primaries and More

Primaries

Election season is here and early voting in Illinois has already begun! Illinois' General Primary Election is coming up quickly on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, and the General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. Make sure you are registered to vote, and mark your calendars for the February deadlines in our cheat sheet (<https://www.usvotefoundation.org/vote/state-elections/state-election-dates-deadlines.htm?stateName=IL>) below!

Illinois General Primary Voting

February 6- March 16, 2020	Early voting
February 18, 2020	Voter registration deadline within offices of the election authority
February 29, 2020	February 29, 2020 ONLINE voter registration deadline via the State Board of Elections website
March 12, 2020	Absentee ballot request deadline
March 16, 2020	Absentee ballot request in person deadline
March 17, 2020	Absentee ballot postmarked by this date
March 17, 2020	ELECTION DAY!
March 31, 2020	Absentee ballot post received by this date

Illinois General Primary Voting

Illinois General Election

October 19 - November 2, 2020	Early voting
October 6, 2020	Voter registration deadline within the offices of the election authority
October 18, 2020	ONLINE voter registration deadline via the State Board of Elections website
October 29, 2020	Absentee ballot request deadline
November 2, 2020	Absentee ballot request in person deadline
November 3, 2020	Absentee ballot postmarked by this date
November 3, 2020	ELECTION DAY!
November 17, 2020	Absentee ballot post received by this date

Register to Vote

Not sure if you're registered to vote? Checking your voter status is easy, just click here (<https://www.nass.org/can-i-vote/voter-registration-status>) and follow the prompts!

If you're not registered, click here (<https://ova.elections.il.gov/>) and register to vote online!



Spring Into Action Registration is Now Open

We are excited to announce that registration is now open for our 23rd Annual Spring into Action Conference and Advocacy Day on April 28 and 29, 2020! This year we are proud to offer a new, low conference fee at only \$25 to attend.

This two-day event brings together statewide early care and education providers, educators, parents and advocates. Attendees will have an opportunity to participate in timely policy-oriented workshops, networking, and visits to the state capitol.

Please register here (<https://events-actforchildren.force.com/s/lt-event?id=a4911000000UScRQAW>).



The 2020 Census (<https://www.actforchildren.org/census2020/>) is already underway! You will receive an invitation to complete the Census in the mail within the next month. Be sure to review our fact sheet (<https://www.actforchildren.org/census2020/>) for important information about counting children in your community.



Upcoming Events

Governor Pritzker's Budget Address: February 19, 2020

Thank you to all who participated in our Budget Call-In Day of Action on February 4! During his address, keep an ear out for what we have asked the Governor to include in his FY21 budget:

- Increase funding for the **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)** by \$100 million in order to continue expansion of CCAP, increase provider compensation, and lower family co-pays.
- Increase funding for the **Early Childhood Block Grant by \$150 million** in order to expand services, continue investments in infants and toddlers, and increase compensation for teachers.
- Increase funding for **Early Intervention by \$25 million** in order to meet caseload demands, increase provider reimbursement rates, and upgrade the state's data system.
- Increase funding for the **Home Visiting by \$4 million** in order to expand access to more families and increase home visitor wages.



Policymaker Spotlight

We are pleased to share with you our first Policymaker Spotlight! Each month we will interview a policymaker or advocate. We will share what we learned about his/her reasons for becoming an early childhood advocate, who inspires them, and what opportunities they see for the future of early childhood education and care in Illinois.

In honor of Black History Month, we have chosen Representative William Davis (D) 30th District, from Harvey, IL. Representative Davis has served in the Illinois General Assembly since January 2003. We thank him for his continued support of early childhood initiatives, providers and families!

Representative William Q. Davis (D) 30th District, Assistant Majority Leader, Illinois General Assembly

1. **Why did you become an advocate for early childhood education and care?** Two things happened. As a legislator, I was approached by providers in my district—they brought me their concerns, challenges, and issues [in early childhood]. I saw who they were, what they did, and how our local providers impacted kids. They urged me to be more engaged, and to learn and understand what [early childhood] is really about. The second thing that happened was on Oct 10, 2011: my daughter was born. It became personal. I had to understand so many things about her, what she needed, and what growing really means. Things like “what happens? Where does she go [for care]? Who do we trust to care for her?” I wanted to make good choices on her behalf and set her on the right path as she was growing into a toddler.
2. **Who influenced your personal early childhood education and care the most?** I grew up in Harvey, IL and went to day care. Harvey, as a community, is different now than it was in the early 1970s. As a kid, I went to a day care close to my house; they helped me become who I am. So, when I got to school, I was prepared-- I was ready to go. They helped me develop a love for school as a child, and that made me want to do well, to strive for straight A's. [The day care providers] impacted me positively as it related to my education. And of course, I must thank mom and dad.
3. **What do you think is a common misconception about early childhood education and care?** [The education and care] in our communities is more than just day care; these days you have qualified teachers in these settings, we have the right people to properly educate kids. People don't just let your children sit there and watch cartoons—there is real education taking place. And these facilities want to make sure our young people are on track to pursue their education. They propel them forward so they are prepared.
4. **What opportunities for improvement do you see in the way early childhood education and care is supported in Illinois?** As a legislator, I would say fiscally, and I am happy to be on Governor's Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding Commission. It is a unique opportunity for me to learn more than what I think I know already. If nothing else, we know the importance of money. We need the appropriate dollars, and we need to make sure we're keeping up financially. Also, we have to understand the unique differences that exist in diverse areas of the state regarding child care; there's no 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Each area has its own set of challenges. We need to recognize that and be prepared to address them. That's where the policy work comes in—we need to think about what we need to do to support each region individually.
5. **What do you think Illinois does well to support early childhood education and care?** We acknowledge it is important. Over the last few years, we have had a desire to put more money into [early childhood], which is good, because that means there's a willingness there. We understand the evidence that shows us that these investments will pay dividends—not only how young people grasp education— but as you look at the budget, we spend a lot of money in the corrections system. If young people receive quality education, they're less likely to end up in corrections system. We're doing ourselves a better service by making these investments now, and it will pay off down the road. We're creating a sustainable work force of individuals that are educated— whether they work for themselves or a company—but these individuals won't have to rely on public assistance to survive because we're giving them more options.
6. **What policy or initiative in the last 3 years do you believe has made a significant impact on Early Childhood in Illinois?** The new funding formula. While it has a primary focus on K-12, we know there is money included for early childhood. We're looking at this continuum of education from birth-to-college, and instead of propelling students to 'catch up' in K- 12, we have to help students on the front end before Kindergarten. The new formula emphasizes the importance of the early years, and the new formula helps sets the stage for what comes next.
7. **Who are your Early Childhood policymaker heroes?** Organizations like Illinois Action for Children and groups similar that devote this kind of time and energy into improving early childhood care and education, or Advance Illinois-- another important group in this conversation. Local providers like Malika Cooper, Rochelle Galladay, and Janice Martin; these providers brought [early childhood] to my attention. These three ladies, in particular, are my heroes.

